



March 2012

e-LEAN update

Not Me

At the end of every Lean training session, we ask participants to provide a candid evaluation of the session, and to offer suggestions for improvement (if we preach continuous improvement, we ought to live it, right?).

One recent evaluation and comment caused me to cringe.

According to this employee, “the training was good, but in a sense useless. My agency lacks the leadership and vision to do this, and without leadership, our ‘company’ is doomed.”

Whew, that was a bit harsh, right?

Well, maybe. But while the tone of that comment is more negative than most, the underlying message is not that uncommon. Another comment collected at that same session is representative of some people’s experience.

“We need to get leadership on board. We can make small changes, but in my experience, leaders in my agency are too focused on control and protecting themselves then on genuine improvement”

Are they talking about you?

No, of course not; because you consistently support improvement efforts within your work unit, division or agency with your time, talents, and attention.

You make sure that everyone in your sphere of influence knows that continuous improvement is vital to the future success of your programs, and that you are eager to help remove roadblocks, eliminate waste, support thoughtful risk-takers, and be a visible champion of continuous improvement.

In addition, your co-workers know that when something goes wrong, you will objectively try to understand the root cause to help reduce the chance of it happening again. They know you solicit and listen to staff for ideas on how to improve the operations, and pursue innovative ideas with the tenacity of a salmon swimming against the pounding currents of a frigid Alaskan river.

So, I wonder. Who are they talking about?



DLI Kaizen Team presents future purchasing process

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Lean in '13?

Would you like the State of Minnesota to host a Lean Continuous Improvement conference in 2013? Visit the [Lean website \(www.lean.state.mn.us\)](http://www.lean.state.mn.us) and complete the pop-up survey to share your thoughts.

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Hosts First Kaizen Event



The Department of Labor and Industry hosted a Kaizen event between February 28 and March 2 to streamline their purchasing process for items valued at \$2,500 or less.

The goal of the event was to reduce the time from when a purchase requisition is submitted to when a purchase order is placed. The Kaizen Team observed that the current process took too much time and involved too many physical handoffs, and purchase requisitions often contained incomplete information, further delaying the process.

The team developed a new process that will reduce tasks by 65 percent, waits by 63 percent and handoffs by 62 percent for routine purchases and purchases under \$500. Non-routine purchases and purchases over \$500 will also require less time and effort, reducing tasks by 26 percent, waits by 25 percent and handoffs by 15 percent.

With support from agency leadership, agency-wide communication about the benefits of the new process and staff training, the Kaizen team plans to pilot the new process for purchases under \$500 in May and fully launch the new process at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

The Department of Labor and Industry oversees the state's apprenticeship, construction codes and licensing, occupational safety and health, wage and hour standards, and workers' compensation programs.

Upcoming Events

Visit Lean Online
(www.lean.state.mn.us) for
current Lean training opportunities and events:

Mar. 12-15, DNR Kaizen Event

Mar. 19-22, MDE Kaizen Event

Mar. 27, Martin & Faribault
Counties Lean 101

Mar. 27-30, MnDOT Kaizen
Event

Apr. 3, Lean 101, Registration
FULL

Apr. 5, EMSRB Lean 101

Apr. 11-12, Kaizen Facilitator
Training, Registration FULL

Apr. 24-27, DLI Kaizen Event

May 4, AMSSA Lean Overview

Nearly 4,500 people have participated in Lean activities — how about you? Visit www.lean.state.mn.us to get involved in Lean efforts in your agency!